

Doomed Landmark

Editor, Tribune: The stately Wasatch Stake Tabernacle in Heber appears doomed despite a long fight to save it.

The deadline for raising \$60,000 to buy a site for a new stakehouse has passed. Stake President Call and his supporters are determined that the historic landmark shall come down if the alternate site cannot be provided. . . .

Sixty thousand dollars is a lot of money and even if the committee raised it, the building might become a liability on someone's hands. What should be done is enlarge its seating capacity by restoring once-present balconies, and continue to use it for the purpose for which it was built in 1877.

As a museum, the tabernacle would be too big and costly to maintain for that purpose. The building should be saved because it's still one of the best buildings in Heber, and the amusement hall which will be torn down with it is still virtually as good as the day it was built. It will cost a pretty penny to replace these facilities.

There are charges the tabernacle has deteriorated. There are countercharges that it has been allowed to deteriorate by the group which planned for years to destroy it.

The petition to save the building was signed by 1,365 people—I am told a substantial majority of the adult population of Wasatch Stake.

I have never seen so many bitter people on one issue in Heber, and I spent many years there. The stake authorities may not be remembered as—those who built a fine new stake-chapel building. They may be remembered more as the men who tore down "our tabernacle."

Theron H. Luke
Provo, Utah

Needless Demolition

Editor, Tribune: In this ultra-modern age the slightest tendency toward sentiment is ridiculed. It is refreshing, therefore, to read of New York women, even with financial assets as potential weapons, launching defensive action to preserve irreplaceable historic landmarks: "Womancott" to Fight G. M. Sky-scraper Site," Tribune Jan. 21.

Needless demolition, locally, of traditional buildings characteristically indigenous to specific periods of development and culture, many of which could have been modernized in interiors to today's standards without destroying the classic exteriors, is civic vandalism.

For any city, large or small, such originals—not replicas, would prove a pleasing optical diversion from the cold impersonal glass and steel structures, all similar, save for varied degrees of size and grandeur—which are fast defacing the international landscape.

Margaret Burton

Futile Monument

Editor, Tribune: For the first time in more than 75 years the stately Wasatch Tabernacle at Heber was not the scene of the recent quarterly conference. Apparently as a result of the decision to tear down the historic, beautiful building, the conference was shifted to the new Wasatch High School.

And like a futile monument to the past and the uncaring present, the building stands ghostly and silent—but still dominating Heber's public square as the tallest, most stately, most characteristic feature of the town.

President Call and his supporters have apparently won their battle to destroy the most distinctive landmark in the valley and build a costly new building on its site.

A plea for funds to save the building brought about \$7,000, which backers pledged would be returned if the effort were unsuccessful.

I do not know how many people of Wasatch stake would vote today—in a secret ballot free of pressures—to tear the building down. I do know that 1,366 people signed a petition to save the landmark. I also know that 1,366 adult signatures comprise a majority of the adult population of Wasatch Stake.

And I also know that if the building is destroyed—there will be bitterness in Heber that will not die out until the generations concerned die with it.

Theron H. Luke
Provo, Utah

Save Landmark

Editor, Tribune: "Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set." Proverbs: Chapter 22, Verse 28.

This teaching has fallen on deaf ears, as the powers that be prepare to raze the Heber tabernacle in the name of progress.

There are unoccupied acres as far as the eye can see, yet this one corner, on Main Street, on busy Highway 40, with no parking facilities has been designated as "the place."

Build a new stake center, but leave this "ancient landmark."

Did the Temple in Salt Lake have to be torn down because more space was needed? Did the Tabernacle have to be demolished because it would not hold the conference crowds? How about the Lion House and the Beehive House? Must all these join the fate of the old Salt Lake Theater?

Should the Liberty Bell be tossed into the melting pot to be remolded because of a crack, must Independence Hall be torn down because it occupies a valuable piece of property in the heart of Philadelphia?

Hurry the tourist past the new and on to see the old missions of California, hurry them east to see the landmarks of the Pilgrims, cry your crocodile tears over lost tourist dollars.

"On with the wrecking balls volley and thunder," let this be the battle cry of Utahns everywhere, let Utah be known as "the replica state."

F. S. Giles
Heber, Utah

12600 S. Groveside Ave.
LaMirada, California
June 28, 1964

A Letter to the Editor:

Yesterday I received "The Wasatch Wave", of June 25, 1964. The first thing I saw when I opened the paper was the picture of the Stake Tabernacle (I did not notice what was written), just the beauty of that stately building in its beautiful surroundings. The sky above, the tree, the faint outline of homes on the north and in the west. Standing in all its Glory—a Proud monument and testimony of the handicraft, the labor and sacrifice of all the Wasatch County Pioneers yours and mine. And I thrilled from head to toe, as it has whenever I see the building.

Then I read, "Tabernacle to be Razed in August," then, "Historic Landmark to Fall—The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle will be demolished in August to make room for new Center." I was stunned beyond belief. Reading further down the Conference and the Stake President explaining about the razing of the Social Hall and the Tabernacle to make room for a New Stake and Two-Ward Center. Then I was so shocked I felt torn apart and as if witnessing the slaying of all our Wasatch County Pioneers, who had given up so much and worked so hard to build this buildings as a place of worship.

I can understand the lack of feeling on the part of the people in the Wards and Stake whose pioneer ancestors did not have a part in settling and building of Wasatch County. But how would you feel if the most important landmark in your home town or county were being torn down?

I know the Church Building program and have supported it. But when it comes to razing the Last and Most Important Pioneer Landmark of the Wasatch Stake and County, the one that has played such a big part in the lives of its Pioneers and the descendants of those pioneers, I draw the line. True, it is old, but that is more reason why it should be restored or repaired and stand where it is as The Historic Landmark of Wasatch County and its Pioneers. It is because of the Stake Tabernacle that I feel I know something of a Grandfather of mine who died when my father was a young boy. My Grandfather, Alexander Fortie, had a part in erecting that building as did the Grandparents and Great-Grandparents of the rest of you Wasatch County descendants

of its Pioneers.

Wasatch County Daughters of the Utah Pioneers recently published a book, "How Beautiful Upon the Mountains," of what value will the book be without a real landmark? To be sure a marker can be placed on the Tabernacle grounds stating—"Here once stood the Old Stake Tabernacle built by _____ in the year _____ but it

would be meaningless, with the building gone there would be no interest. To me it is not necessary to build the new Stake and Two-Ward Center on Main Street. Down here they do not build our Wards and Stake Centers on the Main Streets, they build them out of the business part of the towns or cities.

Utah wants to attract Tourists to its Cities and Towns, what is of interest to tourists is the Old Landmarks that show how the Pioneers made the Desert bloom.

I could never donate one penny, nor one minute of labor toward any building, where the last real landmark of historic interest was razed so that the new building could stand in its place.

Signed,
BELVA FORTIE SMITH

28 June 1964

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F. S. GILES
Heber, Utah

Wasatch County Tabernacle!

The Salt Lake Tribune

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Friday Morning, July 24, 1964

Landmarks and Utah Pioneer Heritage

A prime contribution to the special significance of Utah's Pioneer Day commemoration has been the continuing sense of history of the early settlers and their descendants.

The Mormon pioneers who first arrived in the Salt Lake Valley 117 years ago, were aware they were making history, and hundreds of them helped make the Utah story authentic and complete by scribbling detailed diaries, minutes of innumerable meetings and records of organizations and travels.

WITH A FEW lamentable lapses, the unique historical perspective which had its roots in Kirtland, Jackson County and Nauvoo, has persisted through the last century and a quarter. The fact that journals of early-day saints and gentiles are still being discovered and published is a testimonial to the enduring nature of the Utah heritage. Notable examples are the forthcoming journals of Hosea Stout, edited by Juanita Brooks, and articles in the quarterly of the Utah State Historical Society.

Utah history is commemorated in the fine old buildings which have been preserved, notably the Salt Lake Tabernacle and the stake houses in St. George, Brigham City, Bountiful, Coalville and Logan

(to mention only a few) and the stately temples in Salt Lake City, St. George, Manti and Logan.

UTAH'S 1851 statehouse at Fillmore is now a state museum administered by the State Park and Recreation Commission as is the restored summer residence of Brigham Young at St. George, the Jacob Hamblin home at Santa Clara and the old stagecoach inn at Fairfield.

In Salt Lake City the restored city hall houses state tourist offices. The restored Beehive House attracts as many tourists as guides can handle all the year around, and antiquated structures in Liberty Park, also formerly owned by the first territorial governor and church leader, are fascinating to visitors and residents. No less important historically than the Beehive House, which served as the residence of several early LDS church presidents, is the splendid Lion House, just two doors away, which is also architecturally interesting.

The preservation and restoration movement is not limited to Utah's borders.

A non-profit organization is currently undertaking to make Nauvoo, Illinois, a second historic Williamsburg, thanks mainly to the energies of Dr. J. LeRoy Kimball who reminds us that the Mormon architectural heritage is not confined to log cabins and sod huts but also involves beautiful and well constructed residences and edifices.

Unfortunately the urge to "tear down" old structures has afflicted Utah as well as other localities. Sentiment and aesthetic appreciation are being assaulted almost continuously as beautiful and historically significant structures give way to expediency.

"REMEMBER THE SALT Lake Theater" has become a rallying cry of history and aesthetic-minded Utahns, calling attention to belated efforts in recent years to make up for the loss of the famous landmark.

Deep concern is currently being expressed throughout the state over the fate of the 77-year-old Wasatch Stake Tabernacle at Heber City, which though structurally sound is in need of repairs. After years of debate, a tentative decision apparently has been made to raze this splendid structure, an outstanding example of the best in pioneer architecture and craftsmanship of the 19th Century. The historical society, among other organizations, has expressed the hope that this largest and most attractive building in Wasatch County can yet be preserved.

Public pressure often saves the very old but the best of architectural masterpieces of intermediate years are overlooked until it is too late. When a community loses its oldest, and largest landmark, the loss is irreparable and a growing one.

Pioneer Day is a good time to resolve to preserve more monuments to the talent and spirit that made our people great.

Road Shows in Stake House

June-1965 - The answer to what we did at the Heber Tabernacle.

Three excellent roadshows will be formed, these take place in the Wasatch Stake shows will be fresh from the Tabernacle on Wednesday, June 23, 1965 under the direction of Stan Russon of the Drama Department of the YMMIA General Board. The Roadshows will be fresh from "sold-out" performances in the Pioneer Memorial Theatre and Kingsbury Hall on the University of Utah Campus. According to in-

Entertainment during the stage changes will be furnished by a vocal trio consisting of Mrs. Jane Hatch Jordan, a member of the Tabernacle Choir; Francine Heninger, former Miss Utah, and Marilyn Thompson. Mrs. Margaret McQuarrie is the accompanist. This program is being sponsored by the Committee to Preserve the

Heber Tabernacle. There will be no admission charge but contributions will be gratefully accepted. This program is designed to demonstrate the high quality of programs being planned for the Tabernacle which are expected to benefit the entire valley through their appeal throughout the entire region.

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Beehive State News Scene

Provoans Marshal Help For Heber Tabernacle

PROVO (AP)—Help in the efforts to save the Heber Tabernacle from destruction was marshaled in Provo Thursday night.

A group of citizens met at the home of Robert K. Allen to lend their assistance to Salt Lake and Wasatch County groups that are trying to create interest in the use of the 80-year-old building and to acquire funds with which to save it.

They have announced an open meeting next Thursday in the

city's utilities building, Mr. Allen said. Engineers and architects will be present to present appraisals of the building's condition and Utah Historical Society representatives also will be present, he added.